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OUR MONTHS IN THE COUNTRY

This is the title of an article by YM Secretary Kiang Wen-han in the January 26 Tien Feng. ranslation follows:

Towards the end of last August I was honored by being invited to serve on an investigating ommittee to study conditions in the country, and spent four months in a village near Shanghai. his was just at the time of setting up communes, and so I was not only able to see with my own yes the Great Leap Forward in agricultural production, but also personally took part in the hole process of turning over from a cooperative to a commune. Here I wish to tell something f the outstanding impressions I received from this experience.

1. Eating, Living, and Working with the Farmers.

Our investigation team lived in farm homes. I lived first in Tsung-ts'un and then in achiako. In both these places there were communal dining halls, so we ate in these with the rm people while we were there. There we could meet and talk with the farmers. The dining alls are also the places where they hold their meetings and many other activities.

Our plan was to divide our time equally between work in the fields and our investigation ork. I found two advantages for myself in the field work: First it was a good discipline for me. e of the intellectual class never did any manual labor in the old society, and even were in- lined to despise those who did, and thus we were cut off from reality. Through the discipline of abor we are able to cultivate affection for workers, and thus change our own inner selves. During y four months there I learned to do all the tasks involved on a truck farm, the hoeing, irri- ating, etc., and through these tasks came to understand how hard farmers have to work to earn living, and what their life is like.

Another advantage was that this work made me one with the farmers. The only way to les- en the distance between ourselves and the farmers is for us to become workers ourselves, taking ctual part in the toil of the fields. It is in this way that we come to know the thoughts of armers, to appreciate their problems and arrive at solutions of these problems. I discovered that orking in the fields was the best way to become friends with farmers, and come to the place here we could discuss all sorts of questions together.

2. Pull Both Ends, and Hold the Middle.

It was the busy fall season when we arrived in the villages. In order to hasten production we dopted the method of pulling at both ends and holding the middle, encouraging the progressives

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to be still more progressive, and urging the half-way or backward people to catch up with the progressives. In the district we investigated the most advanced cooperative was Chengchiatse, the farmers there were very bold in following directions. They kept to the over-all plan, and were willing to break with tradition, doing everything with vigor. On August 28 we held a meeting in Chengchiatse, to which we invited the cadres from the neighboring cooperatives, so that they might see what was done there, and then we had a discussion meeting with them. Truly the farmers in Chengchiatse go at their farm tasks like soldiers going into battle.

At the end of August we held an emulation meeting in the western part of our district, where every one was zealous at offering suggestions for improving their work. They adopted as their slogan "Learn from Chengchiatse, catch up to Chengchiatse, beat Chengchiatse."

Last year there was a great deal of rain and storm, so the local Committee called upon the whole population to "declare war against Old Heaven." In their labors to keep the fall crops from being destroyed the farmers showed great courage and persistence. On September 1 we called together the responsible cadres of eight cooperatives, and they agreed to answer the call of the Committee by working for thirty hours without stopping, in order to open up drainage ditches to carry off the rainwater. Work was begun that very evening, and we of the investigation team worked with them all night long. Later we picked Chengchiatse as the place where the best work was done, and Hongku as a mediocre place, and had all the cadres come and inspect carefully these two places, so as to establish standards for what was good or mediocre work, and thus they could go back to their own cooperatives and apply these standards in self-criticism, from which they could learn how to improve.

3. Government Leadership Is the Key to Advance.

My four months' experience convinced me that the key to the great advance made last year in agriculture was the leadership provided by the Government, and Government leadership means direction by the Party. Our Government today is closely bound up with the whole question of production, for it is only through increasing production that the life of the farmers can be bettered. The Party Committee's first concern is to increase farm production, and so it makes concrete plans for every aspect of farm life. According to our experience those who take the Party's recommendations seriously have very good results, and those who do not are not able to make any contribution to the Great Leap Forward.

When we arrived at Tsungts'un we found that some of the cadres had upper middle class thinking, and opposed the Party's proposals, to the detriment of production. Some of the vegetables planted were of the wrong variety, and were eaten by insects, and the farmers were complacent about their work and would not exert themselves. After the commune was organized we had thorough meetings for self-criticism, and the viewpoint of the poor farmers was brought forward, against that of the upper middle class. In vigorous debate the latter were rebuked, and then production improved.

After the Government took more active charge the attitude of the farmers in Tsungts'un materially altered. In this area, due to its proximity to the city, the number who depend entirely upon farming is in the minority, many have family members who work in factories, and some have houses for rent. They would not work hard, and would only work short hours. After the commune was organized and Party leadership established, then their social consciousness was raised, and they began to realize that working hard was not just a question of doing one's job, but has a direct bearing on national production, and then their work increased 100%. Thus when the thinking is right the courage is great, and when the courage is great production takes a Great Leap Forward; this is the inevitable result of Government leadership.

To be continued.

PREACHERS ON THE LABOR FRONT

The three 1959 numbers of Tien Feng give us more details about the way in which preachers and Bible women are taking part in manual labor. There is as yet no over-all picture, but we do have vivid vignettes of the actual work done in several presumably typical cities.

Wuhu. Chi Chia-keng reports in the March 2 Tien Feng that Wuhu religious circles took part in the 1958 Great Leap Forward, in particular after returning from the Anhwei political study

institute held in the spring of the year. Just for the month of September alone, although they had been assigned only 180 days of "voluntary" labor, they performed 196, thus over-fulfilling the target by 8.8%. Their work was to provide rations for the rapacious maw of "General Steel". He states that they made three trips a day, a total of 90 li a day, but does not say whether one way they would be shoulder-carrying, or pushing a cart, or perhaps leading animals both way. According to Mr. Chi, they were so enthusiastic about their work that after walking 90 li they still wanted to do something more in the evening. In addition there was their "avocation", in which they raised 700 pounds of turnips, 7,000 pounds of cabbage, and at least 14 pigs and an undetermined number of chickens. For 1959 their target is to raise 1,000 chickens. Of their pigs they killed one for themselves at Christmas, another at New Years, and two at Chinese New Years, and sold ten to the Food Corporation. The vegetables they raised were rationed out to them at short intervals, every second or third day.

The strenuousness of the above program of work would depend of course upon the number of people among whom it was divided, and here unfortunately the article gives us no direct clue. From my knowledge of Wuhu I should judge that it could hardly be more than 15 or 20 (unless some laymen are included), but the fact that the one-pig ration of Christmas and New Years was not considered enough for Chinese New Years, when two were killed, suggests a considerable number of participants. The writer states, "Now that the churches are united, we workers have a very close relationship, working, producing, studying and living together. Every one says, this is one of the blessings which the Party has bestowed upon us."

Tientsin. With a larger group involved in Tientsin, the work is more varied and the actual amount accomplished by each person even more difficult to estimate than in Wuhu. As in Wuhu, the full tide of this work came after a study institute, in which they learned to be ashamed of their "parasitic and exploiting life," and to honor the life of the laborer. First they had a spell at forestation work, and then "four times" working at the construction of a public park (how long each "time" was is not stated), in which they dug out a basin to form an artificial lake, and heaped up the dirt to form an artificial mountain. Then they had three "times" of work on the waterways in and around Tientsin, the purpose of which was to separate more completely the salt and the fresh channels, and thus make the water in the latter usable for irrigation etc. Here it is stated that the third "time" was 36 days long. In this or the public park work, the religious work team was awarded two "sputniks", one because every man in the team had carried more than 12,600 pounds of stone in a day, and the other because every man in the team had excavated two cubic meters in a day. (This probably involved carrying the excavated dirt to the hill site.)

Regular factory work began in September. Under government direction religious circles in Tientsin were enrolled in three factories. "We Protestant Christians were assigned to two--a porcelain fixtures factory and a garment factory, the former newly set up by the Religious Affairs Bureau as a place to put preachers to work, and the second taken over from the Buddhists and expanded in its scope." In the factories the especially effective workers are honored by being listed as first, second or third grade workers. This granting of honors is said to be very democratic, with the nominations made by small groups of the workers themselves. 31 Protestant Christian workers were so honored, 4, 13, and 14 respectively in the three classes.

Kweilin. Protestant and Catholic church workers in Kweilin are all working together in a pickle factory, where in the first half year of production they have made 50,000 pounds of pickled turnips, cabbages, ginger, etc., and 10,000 pounds of soy bean sauce, for a total value of over ¥13,000. As a result of this good production, the pastors have been receiving as wages 45% more than they had previously been receiving as pastors. Here too there was a system of honors and awards at the end of the year. Three of the Protestants were honored as "positive elements" and six others were given honorable mention. The name of the factory is the Red Light Pickle Factory.

Nanning. In Nanning Protestants and Catholics are all working in a salt refining factory. Last November they themselves laid the foundation of the building, and by January they were ready to begin work. Their daily output of refined salt is 800 pounds, but it is planned to increase this to 2-1/2 tons, in order to meet the needs of Nanning and vicinity.

In other places in Kwangsi the clergy seem mostly to be working on the "steel battle line", and a number of them are said to have been honored as model workers. This news was culled by Tien Feng from "Church News", a publication of the Kwangsi Province Three Self Committee.

NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE

The January 12 Tien Feng carries a New Year's Message from Bishop Robin Chen, who has been the Presiding Bishop of the Anglican Church in China, and now as Chairman of the Three Self Patriotic Movement can be said to be the titular head of the united Protestant Church in China. He begins by pointing out the economic and social advances made in China during 1958, and then summarizes the accomplishments within the church for the year 1958 under four points: 1) The Church has been purified through the expulsion of bad and counter-revolutionary elements. 2) The churches everywhere have taken up united worship, fundamentally altering the semi-colonial aspect of the Chinese Church, and making it truly independent. 3) The clergy have had their political consciousness raised, and have come to understand that they belong to the class of exploiters; they are now willing through the discipline of labor to change their class position and become self-supporting. 4) The whole Christian Church has learned to accept the guidance of the Communist Party, and is determined to work energetically for the establishment of socialism, and thus show themselves to be one with the Chinese People.

He then goes on to express his hopes for the year 1959. This he does under ten points, most of which are concerned purely with the economic and social program of the Communist Party, and could have been voiced by Mao Tse-tung as well as by a Christian bishop. They are that Christian laborers work hard to meet their work quota, that the clergy, as well as capitalist and intelligentsia laity, endeavor during this year to change their class status, that rural Christians throw themselves into the establishment of communes, etc. Three of the ten hopes have more of a Christian overtone: 6) That Christian youth may advance in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man; but he adds that to accomplish this last point, they must unite themselves with the youth of the whole country. 7) That for the aged this may be a year in which they see the great power of the Heavenly Father and experience His gracious love. 9) That all Christians may so dwell in Christian love that they increase in mutual love and unity, until they arrive at the fulness of the stature of Christ.

His tenth hope is that all Christians may unite themselves ever more firmly with the People, circumvent all imperialist intrigues, continue to purge imperialist thinking from the church and from our own thinking, and thus gain a still more decisive victory over imperialism, at the same time work still harder for the establishment of socialism, and thus make our contribution to the Great Leap Forward.

MISSIONARY NEWS

Recent deaths: Deaconess Elsie Riebe, formerly Episcopal missionary in Ichang, on March 31; Mrs. Jacob Speicher on February 18 and Dr. C.E.Bousfield on March 1, both formerly Baptist missionaries in Swatow; and Mrs. P.R.Bakeman on February 28, formerly Baptist missionary in Hangchow. The Mrs. Robert Wellwood whose death at the age of 95 we reported in the April 13 Bulletin was also a Baptist missionary. She served in West China from 1891 to 1925. (Our earliest office directory of China missionaries is for the year 1930, and that is why we could not identify her previously.)

CHURCH NEWS

A mission board secretary's letter states, "In September 1958, 'The Millions' reported that Wang Ming-tao was back in prison in Peking after withdrawing what he said publicly on release from the previous imprisonment. He denied that he was responsible for the 'confession' made under his name in the official church newspaper." We have not been able to find this news item in The Millions, but presume the writer must have had some authoritative source for it.

Tien Feng in reporting on the 1958 celebration of Christmas states that the churches in Shanghai which have formerly had Christmas feasts for their members abandoned that wasteful and uneconomic practice this year, and substituted a simple tea instead. It is reported that they all celebrated Christmas with great warmth. However, the churches in Shanghai which are still open are still not identified for us. When one is referred to it is spoken of as the church in the Hongkew or the Kiangning district. The editor must have felt that this Shanghai report was a rather discouraging one, for on the opposite page he has sought to make it seem more hopeful by contrasting it with the doleful Christmas spent by many Americans, so many of whose family circles were broken up by members being in the armed forces many thousands of miles away from home.

The churches in Chungshan County, Kwangtung, all united in November 1958. They include: CCC Shih-ch'i-tang; Congregational Church; Christ Church Anglican; Baptist Church; Pentecostal Church; Chinpalun Presbyterian Church; Seventh Day Adventist Church. After unification all surplus property was "freely" donated to the local commune.